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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 001735

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2015
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KJUS](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: U/S GROSSMAN AND SENATOR PARDO DISCUSS LEGAL
FRAMEWORK FOR PARAMILITARY DEMOBILIZATION

REF: BOGOTA 1660

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood, Reasons: 1.4 B & D.

1. (C) Summary: On February 14, visiting U/S Grossman and Ambassador discussed the status of draft demobilization legislation with Senator Rafael Pardo. U/S Grossman expressed the U.S. desire that any legislation be transparent, workable, and put the paramilitaries out of business. Pardo worried about the proliferation of legislative proposals in the last week and the lack of coordination on the part of senior GOC officials. Ambassador noted that President Uribe had committed to rally GOC officials around the proposal introduced February 9 by Interior and Justice Minister Sabas Pretelt. End Summary.

2. (C) U/S Grossman noted that given the importance the USG places on paramilitary (AUC) demobilization, the U.S. is following debate on the draft demobilization bills closely. He stated that demobilization is a key part of the peace process, and congratulated Colombia for having demobilized roughly 5000 AUC members. While the specifics of the legislation are for Colombians to decide, he stressed that we want to see a law that is transparent, strong on punishment, and that puts the AUC out of business. U/S Grossman urged Pardo to view demobilization legislation as a likely model with which to put the ELN and FARC out of business as well.

3. (C) Ambassador told Pardo that in U/S Grossman's meeting with President Uribe earlier on February 14 (septel), both Uribe and Legal Advisor Camilo Ospina indicated that the GOC desired to be associated with only one bill (in spite of widespread media speculation that senior GOC officials were divided on the issue). Ambassador noted that Uribe said the GOC preferred the bill introduced by Interior and Justice Minister Sabas Pretelt on February 9. Ambassador reviewed the points on which the USG has insisted in private conversations with GOC officials and members of Congress:

- Disclosure of past criminal or terrorist activities, a key step toward national reconciliation;
- Punishment for all those responsible for serious crimes;
- Dismantlement of these narco-terrorist organizations through seizure of property, and individual and collective reparations;
- Transparency; and
- Government monitoring and control to ensure that those demobilized do not return to crime.

Ambassador also emphasized that the law should contain nothing that could prejudice Colombia's excellent cooperation on extraditions.

4. (C) Turning to the specifics of the bills formally introduced to the Congress, Pardo noted that GOC negotiators took 80 percent of his draft and incorporated it in theirs. Pardo stressed that his group's version is the strongest in terms of confession of crimes. Pardo also noted the importance of dismantling the AUC's organization, business, and drug routes; and not just taking away their weapons. Turning to the bill introduced by Rep. Armando Benedetti on February 11, which he described as the draft the GOC "really wanted," Pardo rejected it out of hand, lamenting its lack of reference to both confession and reparations, and the fact that it did not exclude members of drug cartels. Pardo noted that the AUC's web page had "welcomed" the Benedetti version.

5. (C) U/S Grossman asked Pardo how he expected the deliberations in the Congress to proceed. Pardo responded that the GOC should announce it has agreed on one position

and that he supposed it would be the draft that Sabas Pretelt introduced on February 9. However, the remained skeptical that the GOC would "fight hard for it." Ambassador commented that the GOC bill appeared to be the compromise bill, in the middle position between the Pardo group draft and the latest entry from Rep. Benedetti.

16. (C) In terms of support for the different bills, Pardo stated that his bill counts on 8-9 votes in the 18-member Senate First Committee, with the Sabas Pretelt version counting on 8-9 as well. In terms of the Full Senate, Pardo admitted his group's bill only counts on approximately 35 votes (of 102 total). Regarding the House, he said that his group's version has 12-14 votes in the 35-member First Committee and is far from a majority in the full Chamber. Pardo felt the Benedetti bill had strong support in the House. Given the flourish of bill-drafting activity in the last 10 days, Pardo worried in the end that a "child of Frankenstein" hodge-podge bill would emerge.

17. (C) In response to a question from U/S Grossman about merging his bill with the Pretelt bill, Pardo expressed pessimism. He said that perhaps prior to the strong pronouncements by VP Santos and Peace Commissioner Restrepo against the Pardo group version such a possibility had existed, but not now.

DRUCKER

=====CABLE ENDS=====